

apt to create confusion. Doubtless such would be the temporary result in this and all similar instances when errors are corrected which have been continued by writers who have simply followed each other without making independent investigations; but the confusion is originally caused by those who commit errors, not by him who corrects them. . . . It may be inconvenient for those who have become familiar with any special group to have their ideas of its nomenclature disturbed, by showing that errors have been committed and then knowingly continued; but that would be a most indefensible reason to advance why these should not be corrected. . . . Conservatism is an excellent principle when it serves as a bulwark against the commission of abuses, but is a most baleful principle when it is exerted against the correction of errors." Part V, not yet published, will conclude the work. — J. A. A.

**Two Popular Bird Books.**—That there has recently sprung up a great popular interest in outdoor studies of nature is abundantly evidenced by the frequent appearance of non-technical works, particularly of works relating to birds. It is furthermore a subject of congratulation that such works show a steady improvement, not only in literary execution, but in the knowledge of the subject displayed on the part of the writers of such books. Also that the demand for them renders it feasible for publishers not only to bring them out, but to give to them an attractive setting as regards typography and illustration. Mr. Keyser's 'In Bird Land,' and Mr. Parkhurst's 'The Birds' Calendar' are recent ventures in the line of popular bird books.

Mr. Keyser's book<sup>1</sup> relates especially to the birds found about Springfield, Ohio. It consists of eighteen chapters, originally published in various periodicals during the last two or three years. It has a more distinctly literary flavor than Mr. Keyser's former collection of papers,<sup>2</sup> and abounds in poetic quotations, chiefly from the writings of Emerson and Lowell. The following transcript of the titles indicates the general style of treatment: 'Wayside Rambles'; 'Bird Curios'; 'Winter Frolics'; 'February Outings'; 'Arrival of the Birds'; 'Winged Voyagers'; 'Plumage of Young Birds'; 'Nest-Hunting'; 'Midsummer Melodies'; 'Where Birds Roost'; 'The Wood-Pewee'; 'A Pair of Night-Hawks'; 'A Birds' Gala-Day'; 'Various Phases of Bird Life'; 'A Bird Anthology from Lowell,' etc. The writer is an earnest and true bird lover, who wanders in all weathers and at all seasons in search of bird friends. He tells pleasantly what he sees, often with realistic detail, and shows himself to be not only

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<sup>1</sup> In Bird Land | By | Leander S. Keyser | . . . [ = 9 lines of poetic quotations and monogram ] | Chicago | A. C. McClurg and Company | 1894. 12mo., pp. 269.

<sup>2</sup> Bird-dom. 12mo., 1891. See Auk, IX, p. 63.

a competent observer, but quite capable of imparting to his readers the many bits of bird lore he gathers with so much zest from wood and field. The book properly closes with a good index.

Mr. Parkhurst's book<sup>1</sup> is much in the same vein, but rather more methodical in plan. Mr. Parkhurst's field is Central Park, New York City, and his book is "an informal diary of a year's observations" made chiefly "in that small section known as 'The Ramble' covering only about one-sixteenth of a square mile." The "observations," however, form really but a small part of the book, since they are made as it were the thread upon which he hangs an extensive array of general facts about bird life, such as would be most likely to interest the inexperienced but eager student of birds in their haunts. We find him rarely tripping in his general statements, while his observations on Central Park birds show him to be a careful field student, whose pleasantly told experiences must entice many of our city folk, who feel a longing for contact with living nature, to share his rambles. His book opens with a 'Prelude,' followed by chapters which bear simply the names of the months of the year, from January to December. It concludes with a 'Postlude' and an excellent index. The 'Postlude' gives a list of the 94 species met with, as a summary of his year's observations, which contain many facts of interest to ornithologists as well as to the lay reader. His style is attractive, and he has a way of 'putting things' that prevents his pages from becoming monotonous, as might easily prove the case with such a subject.

A feature of special interest to ornithologists is the illustrations, since they afford an indication of the possibilities of photography as a means of illustration in bird books. They are nicely executed 'process' plates, made from photographs of stuffed birds, with appropriate natural surroundings, the birds being from specimens in the 'Local Collection' of birds in the American Museum of Natural History; the pieces were designed and photographed by Mr. John Rowley, Jr., Chief of the Department of Taxidermy at the Museum. — J. A. A.

'The Birds About Us.'<sup>2</sup> — This is the latest of Dr. Abbott's charmingly written books on popular Natural History. In the present volume it has been the author's aim to treat briefly in systematic order of the more common birds of the United States — more especially of the Delaware Valley. The species are not treated under separate headings but we pass directly from one to another, ten to twenty being considered in each chapter. The characteristic habits of each bird are set forth in the

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<sup>1</sup> The Birds' Calendar | By | H. E. Parkhurst | . . . [= 2 lines from Wordsworth] Illustrated | New York | Charles Scribner's Sons | 1894. 12mo., pp. viii + 351, with 24 full-page process plates.

<sup>2</sup> The Birds About Us. By Charles Conrad Abbott, M. D. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1895. 12mo., pp. 288.